(b) if so, whether the Central Government have allotted three new bulletin slots on the prime time to M/s. Rainbow Communications despite opposition by the staff;

(c) if so, the facts and details thereof; and

(d) the steps Government propose to take to bring transparency in the allotment of time slots?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI MUKHTAR NAQVI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) All programme matters relating to Doordarshan fall within the purview of Prasar Bharati which is now an autonomous statutory corporation. Prasar Bharati, as per their existing policy, do not allow private producers to telecast sponsored news programme on Doordarshan. However, M/s. Rainbow Communications, Calcutta were allowed to telecast new based programme in the regional service of DDK, Calcutta by the then CEO, Shri S.S. Gill, without the approval of the Prasar Bharati Board. The decision was subsequently reviewed and the earlier agreement cancelled. Since the producer approached the Calcutta High Court and obtained a stay order, the programme continues as at present. Prasar Bharati has moved both the Calcutta High Court and the Supreme Court against the verdict of the High Court. The matter is sub-judice.

(d) All programme matters fall within the purview of Prasar Bharati and decisions in such cases, including allotment of time slots, are taken by them keeping in view the programme requirements of Doordarshan and over all interest of the organisation.

Clearance of News Telecasts by Regional Doordarshan Stations

592. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether news telecastes from the reginal Doordarshan stations need prior clearance by the authorities in New Delhi and the reasons for this standing arrangements;

(b) whether Government will consider increasing the frequency of news in local languages from the regional stations; and

(c) the nature of consultations with the State Governments in developing programmes for the regional stations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI MUKHTAR NAQVI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Prasar Bharati have intimated that it is not possible at present to increase the frequency of news in local languages from the regional Kendras due to lack of manpower, finance and other infrastructural constraints.

(c) No consultation is normally done except in rare cases when it is considered essential to verify the authenticity and objectivity of the story.

Assistance All India Women's Conference in Setting-up Bio-Gas Plants

593. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that All India Women's Conference is assisting the villages to set up bio-gas plants in the villages throughout the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how many bio-gas plants have so far been set up by the Conference in the villages of Gujarat with district-wise details and how many are likely to be set up during 1997-98?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) All Indian Women's Conference (AIWC) has been assisting non-governmental oranisations